PoWs in Pakistan's Aatk Kila

953. SHRI R.K. ANAND: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that large number of Indian Army personnel are still lodged in Pakistan's Aatk Kila as PoWs; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government for their release?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) As per available information, 54 Indian Prisoners of War are believed to be in Pakistan's custody.

Government, through diplomatic channels, have been consistently taking up the matter with Pakistan. The issue was also raised during the Foreign Secretary level talks between India and Pakistan held in New Delhi on June 27-28, 2004.

Prisoners released by India and Pakistan

954. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA:
SHRI MOTILAL VORA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of prisoners released by India and Pakistan during the last one year;

(b) the number of Indian and Pakistani prisoners in jails as per the information available with Government;

(c) whether any counsellor services are being provided to the prisoners and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the number of Pakistani prisoners facing trial in various courts of the country, and whether any special courts have been set up for speedy trials, and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) As per available information, since 1st January, 2003 till date, India released 30 Pakistani civilian prisoners and 93 fishermen, and Pakistan released 38 Indian civilian prisoners, and 623 Indian fishermen.

(b) A large number of Indian prisoners, including 930 civilians, 407

fishermen, 54 Prisoners of War, and 2 missing Indian defence personnel are presently believed to be in Pakistan's custody. 108 Pakistani fishermen are presently under detention in India.

(c) Consular access to the prisoners is being granted from time to time. Consular access was provided to 10 Indian civilian prisoners on December 18, 2003. India granted consular access to 24 Pakistani civilian prisoners in June, 2004. In addition, India has granted consular access to 103 Pakistani fishermen, and secured consular access to 267 Indian fishermen in Pakistan's custody.

(d) As per available information, 109 Pakistani nationals are facing trial in various courts in India. They can be released after completion of due procedure.

Visas to foreigners and their overstay in India

955. SHRI S.P.M. SYED KHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of visas issued to foreigners to visit India during the last three years;

(b) how many cases have been reported regarding the foreigners over stay in the country after the expiry of the allowed date endorsed in those visas; and

(c) the action taken by Government in these overstay cases?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Number of visas issued to foreigners to visit India during the last three years are as follows:

Year	No. of visas issued
2001	14,87,283
2002	14,99,083
2003	16,33,143

(b) As per the reports received from State authorities, a total of 51,522 foreigners were overstaying in the country as on 31.12.2003.

(c) On detection of overstay by foreign nationals, action is taken against them as per the rules under the Foreigners Act such as financial penalty, deportation, debarring from entry into the country again and imprisonment.